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NEW



YOU'RE HIRED!

Kickstart the career of your dreams at 50-plus with a few simple changes

By Lizzy Denning

More of us are putting off retirement than ever - thanks in part to the rise in the pension age - but also because going out to work gives us purpose, keeps our brains active and even helps us to stay healthy. And of course the additional cash comes in handy too. All of this might explain why the number of people still working into their 80s and 90s has doubled over the last five years!

It's a trend that's set to continue, with Andy Briggs, the Government's Business Champion for Older Workers, calling for every UK employer to increase the number of workers aged 50-69 by 12 per cent by 2022.

But what if staying in your current job isn't an option, you want a new challenge or just need to get back to work to boost your pension pot? Making yourself as employable as you can by playing up your age-related assets could help you up the next step on your career ladder.

Get out there!

"Don't wait to see a job advertised," says Denise Taylor, the author of *You're Hired: Find Work at 50+* (£12.99, Trotman), www.the50pluscoach.co.uk. "Think of the companies you want to work for and approach them directly - you never know they might be looking for someone with just your skill set."

"If you don't do something you love now, when will you? Review everything you've done and focus on

'Don't wait to see a job advertised... you never know when they might be looking for someone with your skill set'

the skills you enjoy using - have a clear idea in mind even if you aren't sure of the job title.

"Then identify relevant companies and send them a targeted letter asking to meet. Don't ask for a job - just say you want to discuss possibilities. People are much more likely to agree to a 20-minute conversation."

SELL YOURSELF

"You can 'de-age' your CV," says Denise. "There's no need to include your date of birth or age, and you don't need to cover every job you've ever done. You only need to go back 10-15 years, unless an earlier job is relevant, and you can take the dates off your education."

"CVs have changed in style since we were first taught to write them, and they now need to be more focused on the specific job. There's a chance your CV will be shortlisted using technology so you need to ensure it contains any keywords mentioned in the job advert."

There's a wealth of CV information (and free templates to download) online on sites such as www.reed.co.uk. But in a nutshell, a modern CV ought to include:



- Contact details
- A personal statement – who you are, and what you have to offer
- Your most recent jobs, when you worked there and bullet points describing some of your main roles and responsibilities
- Two references
- Education and professional qualifications – from shorthand to a clean driving licence, it all counts
- A couple of lines on your hobbies and passions

DID YOU KNOW...?

It's also worth taking the time to create a free online CV on www.linkedin.com, as it's more than likely anyone interviewing you will search for you online before meeting you. As well as being a good way to make contacts, a LinkedIn profile will also prove to potential employers that being over 50 doesn't have any impact on how technically savvy you are.

Be positive

The way we talk to ourselves can either be positive or negative. "Too often we fill our heads with statements like: 'Who will want me? I'm too old. I worked for 28 years in the same company and

that's all I know," says Denise.

We then end up looking for reasons to make that true. "If you keep telling yourself that you'll fail then that's what will happen. Instead, say: 'I have a lot of skills and experience to offer'."

AGE ADVANTAGES

It can be easy to worry about going up against younger candidates for a role, but don't forget that you have a completely different – and equally valid – toolkit. "There are numerous benefits that often come with age," says Denise.

- ✓ You're likely to have much of the expertise required for a job, and are less likely to take time getting trained up.
- ✓ You have the maturity to deal with difficult situations.
- ✓ You can demonstrate loyalty and commitment to your employer. Older employees are unlikely to try to move on after a couple of years – unlike younger staff – and therefore you are saving them the cost of hiring and training someone new again.
- ✓ You're likely to have a strong work ethic and be reliable.
- ✓ You have a wealth of contacts.

Brush up

When it comes to impressing interviewers, it's worth checking your skills and qualifications are the best they can be.

"I regularly meet people who rest on qualifications gained 20 or more years ago," says Denise, "but it pays to make sure your skills are up-to-date."

Are you familiar with the latest version of Microsoft Office? Do you

'Avoid negative self-talk. Instead of saying "I'm too old", tell yourself you have a lot of experience to offer'

need to undertake a short course in using Excel? If you lack confidence in IT, take a course or ask a younger relative to provide some tuition. If you keep telling yourself that you 'don't do technology', it's

